Entry of industrial majors in sugar sector

454.SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the entry of industrial majors in sugar sector;

(b) if so, the reasons and timing of their interest in the sector; and

(c) the reasons of investment by the industries of chemicals, petro chemicals and petroleum in the sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) The sugar industry has been delicensed *vide* Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion's Press Note dated 31.8.1998. Entrepreneurs, subject to applicable laws/ regulations, are free to set up sugarmills anywhere in India based on their individual economic and other considerations.

Quota and prices for PDS

455.SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has submitted a proposal to Government to further cut down the quota and hike the issue prices of foodgrains under the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, whether it includes eight major proposals like reduction of wheat allocation to the States, allocation of coarse grains instead of wheat, removal of foodgrains in the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana etc.;

(c) if so, whether this decision will create great unrest amongst the masses as most of the essential commodity prices have gone beyond their limit; and

(d) if so, whether Government have not agreed to the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) Keeping in view the reduced availability of foodgrains, especially wheat, in the Central Pool and to ensure that the subsidy remains targeted towards poor households as well as to check diversion, the Government took decision to raise the Central Issue Prices (CIPs) of foodgrains for Above the Poverty Line (APL) households and to rationalize the allocation of foodgrains under theTargeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

The Government considering the representations from State Government and others, has decided to postpone the implementation of these decisions.

Wheat quota for APL ration card holders

456.SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drastically cut down the wheat quota for ration card holders under the above poverty line category;

(b) the total cut effected, State-wise;

(c) the provision which has been or is being made for marginal families who drift down to below poverty line with rise in prices; and

(d) the precentage rise in prices of consumer goods during the current year, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The allocation of wheat for Above Poverty Line (APL) category has been rationalized to each State's average offtake for the last 3 years or the last year's offtake, whichever was lower. A 25% cut on this has been imposed in respect of rice consuming States and Delhi for APL category. However, there has been no change in the overall APL entitlements and the State Governments/UTs can ask for allocation of rice in lieu of reduction of wheat allocation under APL.